

# Asbestos & Building/Facility Owners Responsibilities

and in understanding the information contained within the survey. Asbestos awareness training helps ensure that employees do not inadvertently disturb ACM. It also addresses requirements under the standard pertaining to housekeeping activities. Asbestos awareness training can be obtained from a person who is knowledgeable of the subject matter or an environmental consultant.

## What if a building owner or employer in a leased space discovers a building material that may contain asbestos?

All work activities that may disturb a suspect material must cease until a sample of the material has been obtained and analyzed. Due to the sampling procedures that must be followed and the varying number of material samples that must be obtained, an accredited inspector should be contacted to obtain the sample(s). Work that will disturb this material should not continue until the suspect material has been proven to be negative or has been properly abated.

## ACM/PACM is identified during construction or maintenance activities. What does an employer in a leased space have to do?

First, the information on the newly discovered ACM/PACM must be conveyed to the building owner pursuant to Part 602, (k)(4). The information must include the location and quantity of this newly discovered ACM. Second, it must be decided whether abatement of the ACM by a Michigan licensed asbestos abatement contractor will be necessary.

## An individual has disturbed ACM and some of the material is on the floor and/or ground. What should be done?

If the amount of ACM is less than three linear or square feet; thoroughly saturate the debris with water to reduce the release of airborne fibers, restrict entry into the area, and immediately contact a Michigan licensed asbestos abatement contractor to remove the debris.

If the amount of ACM is greater than three linear or square feet, contact the building owner. The building owner should:

1. Restrict entry into the area and post signs to prevent entry into the area by persons other than those necessary to perform the response action.
2. Shut off or temporarily modify the air-handling system to prevent the distribution of fibers to other areas in the building.
3. Contract with an environmental consultant to evaluate the situation.
4. Contract with a Michigan Asbestos Abatement Contractor to remove the debris.

The MDLEG - Asbestos Program performs the following services:

- Approves asbestos-related training courses.
- Accredits professionals in the asbestos abatement industry.
- Licenses asbestos abatement contractors.
- Maintains databases of approved trainers, licensed contractors, accredited individuals, and asbestos projects.
- Investigates asbestos-related compliance issues.
- Reviews AHERA management plans.

## For additional information, please contact us at:

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Construction Safety and Health Division  
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## Asbestos Awareness Training must be provided annually

This brochure is provided as a general summary of the responsibilities of building and facility owners in regard to building surveys and employee training.

### Background

Asbestos is the name of a group of naturally occurring minerals that can separate into microscopic needle-like fibers. The most common of these minerals are *Chrysotile*, *Amosite*, and *Crocidolite*. Once released into the atmosphere, the size and shape of these fibers permit them to remain airborne for long periods of time and thus contaminate the building environment.

If inhaled, these needle-like fibers can cause three specific asbestos-related diseases: *Asbestosis* (a fibrous scarring of the lungs), *Lung Cancer*, and *Mesothelioma* (a cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity). These diseases do not develop immediately after inhalation of asbestos fibers and typically have a latency period ranging from 15 to 30 years and sometimes as long as 40 to 50 years from first exposure before symptoms appear.

### Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)

Asbestos has been used in more than 3,000 different products over the last 100 years primarily because of its thermal insulating, fire retardant, and chemical resistant properties. Some common products in buildings that contain asbestos include but are not limited to pipe insulation, floor coverings, ceiling tile, spray-on insulation, boiler wrap insulation, wall coverings, fire doors, and old electrical wire insulation. Employees, tenants, and custodial maintenance workers may be exposed to ACM during maintenance, renovation, or disturbance activities.



### Building Owners and Employers

Building owners often are the only or best sources of information concerning asbestos hazards within their building. Therefore, they, along with employers of potentially exposed employees, are assigned specific duties under the asbestos regulations. To comply with these regulations, a thorough asbestos inspection must be conducted of all pre-1981 building facilities. This survey must identify the presence, location and quantity of ACM and/or presumed asbestos-containing materials (PACM) within the building.

### Building and Facility Owner Responsibilities

Whether you are a building owner, employer, general contractor, subcontractor, exempt trade group, or asbestos abatement contractor; when work involves the removal and/or disturbance of ACM and/or PACM, you have many legal obligations.

The two Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act (MIOSHA) asbestos standards that directly impact work activities within buildings containing asbestos are Part 305 (the *Asbestos for General Industry Standard*) and Part 602 (the *Asbestos Standards for Construction*). These standards are enforced by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

During investigations, it is often determined that **building or facility owners** have not performed a building survey. This deficiency constitutes a violation that typically carries a significant monetary fine. Building or facility owners can easily avoid such violations by obtaining a building survey from a Michigan accredited asbestos building inspector. For a listing of inspectors, you may contact the Asbestos Program, or search your local yellow pages under "Asbestos Consultants."



### Frequently Asked Questions

**If I find asbestos in my building, what should I do?**

In most cases, ACM does not need to be removed. It should be periodically inspected for signs of damage or deterioration and repaired as necessary. When it is necessary to use or work with ACM, reduce your exposure to fibers as much as possible. Get help from a Michigan licensed asbestos contractor who has accredited workers and is experienced in working with asbestos.

**What should a building owner and employer in a leased space do if the building doesn't have an asbestos survey?**

If an appropriate building survey does not exist, the building owner should contact an environmental consulting firm that has Michigan accredited asbestos building inspectors to conduct an asbestos building survey.



If a building owner does not have a survey, an option for the employer in a leased space would be to hire an accredited asbestos inspector to conduct an asbestos survey of the leased area. This limited survey will help ensure the safety and health of employees in the leased area. It is important to recognize however that the building owner is legally obligated to complete a comprehensive building survey for all asbestos materials in the building.

**Is an employer in a leased space responsible to ensure that employees have asbestos awareness training?**

Yes. Pursuant to Part 305, *Asbestos for General Industry Standard*, section (j)(2)(iii), housekeeping employees must be advised of the building components they maintain, which may expose them to asbestos. Section (j)(7)(iv) also requires an employer to provide asbestos awareness training to the custodial and/or janitorial staff. Asbestos awareness training assists custodial and janitorial staff in identifying ACM/PACM